



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

XIII.—THE DATE OF CHAUCER'S *TROILUS* AND *CRISEYDE*.

In the twenty-fifth stanza of the first book of the *Troilus* occurs a passage which is puzzling in more respects than one. The stanza is as follows :

Among thise othere folk was Criseyda,
In widewes habite blak ; but nathelees,
Right as our firste lettre is now an A,
In beautee first so stood she, makelees ;
Hir godly looking gladede al the prees.
Nas never seyn thing to ben preyed derre,
Nor under cloude blak so bright a sterre.

It is the line about the letter A which, even on a cursory reading, gives one pause, while closer scrutiny but heightens one's perplexity. For, in the first place, as Sandras long ago pointed out,¹ Chaucer has here curiously diverged from Boccaccio. The corresponding stanza in the *Filostrato* reads as follows :

Tra' quali fu di Calcas la figliuola
Griseida, la qual'era in bruna vesta,
La qual, *quanto la rosa la viola*
Di beltà vince, cotanto era questa
Più ch'altra donna bella, ed essa sola
Più ch'altra facea lieta la gran festa,
Stando nel tempio assai presso alla porta,
Negli atti altiera, piacente ed accorta.²

The change from "quanto la rosa la viola di beltà vince" to "Right as our firste lettre is now an A" Sandras characterizes flatly as bizarre,³ and there is much that seems

¹ *Étude sur G. Chaucer*, 1859, pp. 45-46.

² *Il Filostrato*, I, stanza 19.

³ He is illustrating his thesis that "comme les poètes anciens, Boccace excelle à assortir les sentiments et les images ; Chaucer néglige les plus gracieuses comparaisons ou les altère" (*op. cit.*, p. 45). Professor Skeat also notes (*Oxford Chaucer*, 2. 463) that "Boccaccio's image is much finer."

to warrant, at first blush, his stricture. For Chaucer's substitution is, to say the least, prosaic, where Boccaccio is elegant and graceful; so much, whatever one's interpretation of the fact, seems clear.

But it is when one turns from the curious divergence of the comparison from its original to the precise wording of the line itself that the essential difficulty appears. For it seems to have been overlooked that Chaucer is speaking with an explicitness of reference which is unaccountable if the conventional interpretation—that of a somewhat bald use of the letter A *qua* A—be correct.¹ One word in particular demands more critical examination.

In the first place, the line in question reads: "Right as our firste lettre is *now* an A."² Why "*now*?" Has not A always been our first letter? The obvious and, I think, inevitable implication of the line, taken fairly as it stands, is that such has not always been the case. But this implication carries with it the alternative that Chaucer is either so recondite as to advert to a time when the Roman alphabet was not, or so subtle as to intimate that our alphabet, to be sure, was not that of Troilus and Pandare and Criseyde.

¹ Even Professor Skeat's apt citation (*Oxford Chaucer*, 2. 462) of Henryson's reference to Criseyde as "the flower and A-per-se Of Troy and Greece" (suggested as it probably was by Chaucer's phrase) does not, as will be seen, offer a precise parallel.

² There is no question of the text. Except for purely orthographic variations (*oure*, Cl., Harl. 2280, Gg., Cp., Harl. 1239, Add. Ms. 12044; *first*, Cl., Cp., Jo.; *fyrst*, Gg., Harl. 1239; *furst*, Harl. 2280; *ferste*, Add. Ms. 12044; *letter*, Gg., Jo.; *nowe*, Harl. 2280) the six mss. of the *Parallel-Text Print* and the *Three More Parallel Texts*, together with Add. Ms. 12044 (Brit. Mus.), agree throughout. Nor is any variation noted in the collation of Harl. 2392 (now in the Harvard College Library) used by Professor Skeat in the *Oxford Chaucer*. The only exception is Harl. Ms. 3943 (in Rossetti's *Parallel-Text Edition of T. and C. and the Filostrato*), in which the line reads: "Right as our chef lettre ys now A." The bearing of this variant will be noted later.

The suggestion that Chaucer was concerned at this point with the abstruse history of the alphabet one may dismiss at once. Nor is such realistic subtlety as that involved in the second alternative more credible, especially when one recalls Chaucer's own frank disclaimer of historical verisimilitude after arming Palamon's knights with Prussian shields: "Ther nis no newe gyse, that it nas old."¹ But granting either interpretation of the "now," the thing of capital importance to note is that as an element of the comparison the word is wholly without point. For there is nothing in the *present* state of the letter A as A, as compared with some other time than "now," which demands, for the purposes of the simile, such curious explicitness of reference. On the assumption of a comparison with the letter solely as a letter, the passage seems inexplicable.²

But there is unmistakable evidence that what Chaucer did say he said with distinct intention. The name of the heroine occurs in rhyme fifty-three (53) times in the *Troilus*.³ In every one of the other fifty-two instances, without exception in the seven accessible MSS., its form is Criseyde, with final -e. Instead, then, of using (as one might suggest) the letter A itself as the most obvious and easy rhyme for a final -a already written in his first line, Chaucer has deliberately varied, *in order to introduce the A*, from his otherwise

¹ A. 2125.

² Moreover, it is not quite clear why Chaucer, if the comparison is with A merely as A, should say "Right as our firste lettre is now an A." "An A," it is to be noted, has the effect of seeming to individualize the letter, as if the reference were to some A, a certain A.

³ I. 55, 169 (the passage under discussion), 459, 874, 1010; II. 877, 1235, 1417, 1550, 1603; III. 1054, 1112, 1173, 1420, 1473; IV. 138, 149, 177, 195, 212, 231, 347, 378, 666, 829, 875, 962, 1147, 1165, 1214, 1252, 1436, 1655; V. 216, 508, 523, 687, 735, 872, 934, 948, 1031, 1113, 1123, 1143, 1241, 1264, 1422, 1437, 1674, 1712, 1732, 1833.

uniform usage.¹ Whatever the line means, it is clearly no hurried makeshift.

In a word, Chaucer seems to be using an admittedly prosaic, even banal, comparison, instead of the apt and graceful one of his original; seems, moreover, to be phrasing it in a strangely irrelevant, not to say meaningless, fashion; yet is unmistakably doing what he does with deliberate intention. Is there any other possible interpretation of the line?

On January 14, 1382, Richard II, then in the second week of his sixteenth year, and Anne of Bohemia, not yet seventeen, were married at Westminster. Many things conspired to render the young queen consort at once the object of keen interest. For five years previous the marriage of the king had been a matter of anxious thought to his guardians and of manifold conjecture to his subjects. There had been negotiations in 1377 and 1378 looking toward a marriage between Richard and Princess Marie of France;² in 1379 Bernabò Visconti had offered the hand of his daughter Caterina;³ the marriage with Anne herself was

¹ The situation is very closely paralleled in the *Knight's Tale*. In the *Tale*, Emily's name occurs 29 times in rhyme (A. 871, 1077, 1273, 1419, 1567, 1588, 1594, 1731, 1749, 1833, 2273, 2341, 2571, 2578, 2658, 2679, 2699, 2762, 2773, 2780, 2808, 2816, 2836, 2885, 2910, 2956, 2980, 3098, 3107). In every instance except one (A. 1077) it is spelled *Emelye*, with final *-e*. But in l. 1077, through the influence of a following "a," it becomes *Emelya*, with final *-a*:

He caste his eye upon Emelya,
And there-with-al he bleynte, and cryde "a!"

For other instances of rhymes in *-a* see A. 161-2 (crowned A, omnia); *Bk. of Duchesse* 1071-2 (Polixena, Minerva), H. F. 401-2 (Medea, Dyanira), 1271-2 (Medea, Calipsa); A. 867-8 and 881-2 (Ipolita, Scithia); B. 71-2 (Ladomea, Medea); F. 1455-6 (Bilia, Valeria).

² *Life Records*, pp. 203-4.

³ Walsingham, *Hist. Angl.* (Rolls Series), II, 46; Rymer's *Foedera* (ed. Holmes), Vol. III, Pt. iii, p. 84.

under formal consideration as early as the middle of 1380;¹ and the period intervening had not been without its incidents. When at last, after the long delay occasioned by Wat Tyler's rebellion, Parliament was prorogued upon word of Anne's coming, the news of her arrival at Brussels was accompanied by the disconcerting intelligence that twelve armed vessels, sent by the King of France, were waiting in the channel to intercept her.² Charles's *coup de théâtre* was met by prompt diplomacy, and on December 18, 1381, attended by the imposing escort sent to meet her, Anne embarked at Calais, and was conveyed, "cum omni gloria mundi," to Dover. Hardly had she disembarked, however, when a still more startling incident occurred. By a strange and unprecedented disturbance of the sea, the ship from which she had just stepped was broken to pieces, and the rest of the convoy scattered.³ How strikingly this "mirabile cunctis auspicium" contributed to the further focussing of already curious eyes upon the queen, Walsingham's contemporary account⁴ makes clear. Meantime, a general amnesty to the rebels had been proclaimed at her intercession,⁵ and the marriage and coronation were celebrated with "muchel glorie and greet solempnitee."⁶ Any

¹ Tatlock, *The Development and Chronology of Chaucer's Works* (Chaucer Soc., 1907), p. 42; *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, XLVIII, 147; Wallon, *Richard II*, I, 454-5.

² Froissart, *Chroniques*, ed. Raynaud (Paris, 1897), x, 166-67; *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, I, 421.

³ Walsingham, *Hist. Angl.* (Rolls Series), II, 46; cf. Stow, *Annales* (London, 1631), p. 294; Holinshed's *Chronicles* (London, 1807), II, 753. For further references see *Mod. Lang. Notes*, vol. XIX, pp. 240-43.

⁴ Walsingham, II, 46.

⁵ See Wallon, I, 455, for references.

⁶ One must not forget, moreover, that almost at once the prevalence of high headdresses peaked like horns, of long trained gowns, of extravagantly pointed shoes, testified to the young queen's vogue; "also noble women . . . rode on side saddles, after the example of the Queene, who

allusion, one may be sure, to Anne of Bohemia, during the months succeeding her dramatic arrival, would be secure of ready comprehension.

Moreover, that Chaucer himself would be particularly apt to turn to account any chance of a passing and graceful allusion to the queen, one has evidence enough. He had been one of the commissioners to negotiate the marriage of Richard II to the Princess Marie, before Anne of Bohemia was thought of;¹ he had celebrated in the *Parlement of Foules* the betrothal of Anne herself; the bringing home of Hippolyta to Athens associated itself in his mind, as he began the story of Palamon and Arcite, with the eventful arrival of Anne, and by a single vivid touch the tempest at Anne's home-coming had been shifted to Hippolyta's.² What could be more in keeping than that again, in the poem of all others whose vogue at court Chaucer could not but have foreseen, he should permit himself a delicately veiled and graceful reference to the queen?³

So much is *a priori*; but when one reverts with the suggestion thus gained to the hitherto baffling lines about the letter A, one finds all the perplexities resolved. For every detail which was absurd or impossible when applied to A as A, becomes clear and relevant if the allusion is to Anne. "Right as our firste lettre is now an A"—the passage runs—"In beautee first so stood she makeless."

The two "firsts," for one thing, are brought at once into complete coördination. If A stands as the initial of the first

first brought that fashion into this land, for before, women were used to ride astride like men" (Stow, *Annales*, London, 1631, p. 295).

¹ *Life Records*, pp. xxviii, 203-4, 219, 230.

² See my discussion of this point in *Mod. Lang. Notes*, vol. xix (December, 1904), pp. 240-43.

³ The specific dedication of the *Legend of Good Women* to the queen comes later; but it shows like the rest how definitely at this period Chaucer had the queen in mind.

lady of the realm, it becomes thereby "our *firste* lettre" in just the sense in which Criseyda is "in beautee *first*."¹ Moreover, precisely this sense of "first" clears up at once the mystery of the "now." For instead of being a gratuitous statement about the alphabet *per se*, the line conveys the courtly suggestion of a new dignity conferred upon what is now her letter by the coming of the queen. A has always begun the alphabet; *now* the king's choice of his consort—"unto my sovereyn lady, and noght my fere," Chaucer himself had made him say²—has constituted it "our *firste* lettre" in a double sense. Even the "our," instead of breathing purely alphabetic ardors, adds its light but unmistakable touch of national loyalty to the young queen.³

Boccaccio's elegant but hackneyed "*quanto la rosa la viola Di beltà vince*" has given place, then, not to a bizarre transmutation, as Sandras supposed, but to an aptly turned and adroitly worded compliment at court. Just as a certain A is now our first letter—just as (that is to say) its bearer is the "flour and A-per-se" of ladies in the realm

¹ The "*chef* lettre" in Harl. Ms. 3943 (see p. 286, n. 2)—"Right as our *chef* lettre ys now A"—almost looks as if the Harleian scribe (or some predecessor) had understood and tried to make even clearer the allusion.

² *Parlement of Foules*, l. 416.

³ Moreover, if the A referred to is not after all the mere first letter of the alphabet, but a specific A, the royal A, the now familiar initial of the queen, the problem of "*an A*" is also solved. Whether, indeed, as may well be, the collocation is accidental, or whether Chaucer is designedly heightening the transparency of his allusion, the fact itself remains that "*an A*," read with the fourteenth century pronunciation of the A, gives the familiar Latin form of the queen's name. It is the letter, to be sure, and *not* the name of which Chaucer is speaking; but double allusions would fare ill if they had to be rigidly logical, and a double allusion here can scarcely be said to be out of keeping with the context. The fact, in any case, is there, and must be reckoned with, despite Chaucer's disinclination to pun.

—so Criseyda stood first in beauty without peer. And it must not be overlooked that “so” looks back as well as forward, and dexterously links “in beautee first . . . makeless” with the implication of its preceding line, in no less delicate than pertinent recognition of the fact that beauty is an indefeasible prerogative of queens. “Ye knowe eek,” Chaucer found it necessary shrewdly to remind his own contemporary readers,

“Ye knowe eek, that in forme of speche is chaunge
With-inne a thousand yeer, and words tho
That hadden prys, now wonder nyce and straunge
Us thinketh hem ; and yet they spake hem so.”¹

And all this which now it takes so disproportionately many words to make explicit, for the very reason that the “chaunge withinne a thousand yeer” *has* made it “wonder straunge” to us, one may readily believe was patent at a glance to Chaucer’s quick-witted audience at court, adepts in the art of allusion as they were.²

But there are facts which seem to make it unnecessary to appeal to any special proficiency in the interpretation of allusions on the part of Chaucer’s readers—facts which seem, indeed, to render this particular allusion so obvious as to be unmistakable, even now. It is only a few years since the death of Queen Victoria and the accession of Edward VII made strikingly evident, in the sweeping changes involved in the substitution of E. R. for V. R., the part still played in actual affairs by the royal initial. What was the usage in the court of Richard and Anne?

¹ T. ii, 22-25.

² One has only to recall, for example, the literature of the Flower and the Leaf, on both sides of the channel, to be satisfied on that score. Indeed, if an allusion had *not* been intended, it is hard to believe that one would not have been *understood*—if the dates allowed!

It is worth while to go back for a moment to the preceding reign. In the Wardrobe Roll of 21st Edward III—the roll which contains the first reference to the celebrated motto of the Garter—there are mentioned “materials . . . for three escutcheons of the king’s arms, quarterly ; of blue and silver cyprus, sindon and silk for making forty clouds for divers of the king’s garniments, embroidered with gold, silver and silk, *having an E in the middle of gold*, and garnished with stars throughout the field, or ground.”¹ Not only were the king’s garments embroidered with his initial, but the royal plate was also marked with it. In his “Observations on the Origin and History of the Badge and Mottoes of Edward Prince of Wales,”² Sir Harris Nicolas refers to “an indenture (not hitherto known) witnessing that Sir Henry de Wakefeld, late Keeper of the King’s Wardrobe, had delivered to . . . de Mulsho, his successor in that office, at Windsor, on the 24th of October, in the . . . year of the reign of King Edward the Third, the plate therein mentioned. The date of the year no longer exists, but it must have been after the 43d Edward III, 1369. The Roll commences with a list of plate belonging to the King, some articles of which were marked with the Arms of England and France quarterly ; others with a leopard, others with a fleur-de-lis, others with a rose, *others with a crowned E.*” It is clear that the king’s initial was a familiar object at Court during the reign of Edward III. But was the queen’s ? “The second membrane of the Roll,”

¹ Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas, “Observations on the Institution of the most noble Order of the Garter,” *Archaeologia*, xxxi, 120. See also John Gough Nichols, *Archaeologia*, xxix, 47 : “Ashmole quotes from the Wardrobe Roll of the 21st Edw. III a charge for ‘forty of these clouds [from which the sun of the king’s device was rising], embroidered with gold, silver, and silk, *having in the middle the Saxon letter E of gold*, provided to trim several garments made for the king, and garnished with stars.’”

² *Archaeologia*, xxxi, 352.

Sir Harris Nicolas continues, "is entitled the 'Queen's Plate'—'Vessellamenta Reginae,' which title, and the fact that all the articles, if marked at all, were marked with *her* arms, or *her* initial,¹ are very important to this inquiry." Among these articles were "fifteen silver spoons, one of which is gilt and not marked, and fourteen of silver not gilt, marked outside with the letter *¶*."² There were, moreover, "five silver salt-cellars, marked on the edge with the letter *¶*,"³ and in this case the entry reads "*¶*. coron."⁴ Queen Philippa, accordingly, used her own initial as the king used his.⁵ During the reign of Edward III, then, the initials not only of the king, *but of the queen consort as well*, appeared on various objects about the court. The inference that *Anne's* initial would probably be no less conspicuous is an easy one.

But one does not have to rely upon inference. There is conclusive evidence that *Anne's* initial *was* a familiar object to the readers of the *Troilus*. Even in the reign of Edward III, as has been seen, it was the vogue to embroider initials upon court robes.⁶ During the reign of Richard II, and especially after Richard's marriage to Anne of Bohemia, the custom of wearing letters and armorial devices became a

¹ The italics are Sir Harris Nicolas's.

² *Archæologia*, xxxi, 353; see p. 377 for transcript.

³ *Ib.*, p. 354.

⁴ *Ib.*, p. 379.

⁵ I do not feel sure that the E and P which appear over the ostrich feathers in the Black Prince's Great Seal of the Duchy of Aquitaine (see Sandford's *Genealogical History*, p. 125, quoted in *Archæologia*, xxxi, 362) may not stand for Edwardus Princeps, rather than as the initials of the king and queen. But the latter seems to be a possible alternative.

⁶ Compare also Strutt, *Dress and Habits of the People of England* (1842), II, 243, n. 7: "An old English chronicle ms. cited in the second volume of the *horða Anŷelcynn*, page 83, informs us, that in the reign of Edward the Third, 'the Englishmenne clothede all in cootes and hodes peynted with lettres and with floures.'"

craze, reaching finally such an extreme that in the succeeding reign prohibitory statutes were enacted.¹ That Richard himself wore his own initial on his royal robes is placed beyond doubt by the famous painting of the king in the choir of Westminster Abbey, said to be the earliest contemporary portrait in existence of an English king. In Dart's *Westmonasterium*² is a large and beautiful print of this painting,

¹After discussing the prohibitory statutes of 4 Henry IV (1403) relating to apparel, Strutt continues: "Four years after the establishment of these statutes, another was added; by which it was ordained, that no man, let his condition be what it might, should be permitted to wear a gown or garment, cut or slashed into pieces in the form of *letters*, rose-leaves, and posies of various kinds, or any such like devices, under the penalty of forfeiting the same" (II, 108). See also *Archaeologia*, xx, 102: "Armorial devices were embossed and embroidered upon the common habits of those who attended the court [of Richard II]. Upon the mantle, the surcoat, and the just-au-corps or bodice, the charge and cognizance of the wearer were profusely scattered, and shone resplendent in tissue and beaten gold. The custom of embroidering arms upon the bodice was introduced by Richard II, but mantles of this kind had been worn long before" (*Translation of a French Metrical History of the Deposition of King Richard the Second, written by a Contemporary . . .* By Rev. John Webb). On the passion for finery in the reign of Richard II see also Shaw, *Dresses and Decorations of the Middle Ages*, London, 1843, Introduction, under XIV century; also I, plate 33. The plates in Shaw and Strutt (as, for example, Plates xciii, xcvi, xcvii, in Strutt, and the plate in Shaw, vol. I, no. 33) are illuminating. Compare also *An Alliterative Poem on the Deposition of Richard II*, in *Political Poems and Songs* (Rolls Series), I, 398 ff.; or ed. Camden Soc., pp. 19 ff. More generally, one may recall the mottoes embroidered on the sleeves (l. 119) of the ladies in *The Assembly of Ladies*, II. 88, 208, 308, 364, 489, 583, 590, 598, 616; see Skeat, *Chaucerian and other Pieces*, p. 536. Note also Gower's reference (*Cronica Tripartita*, I, 52) to the Earl of Derby as "Qui gerit S," in allusion to his badge. In *Anglia*, xxx, 320, Miss Eleanor Prescott Hammond calls attention to the allusions, in *Rondeaux et autres poésies du XVe siècle* (Soc. des Anc. Textes franç.), pp. 72, 108, 135, to "her for whom I wear the M," "the A," etc. Miss Hammond interprets these letters as referring to Amor. But may it not be that the lover is wearing his mistress's initial?

²London, [1742], I, opposite p. 62. It is described as "an antient Painting of that unhappy beautiful Prince Richard II, sitting in a Chair of Gold, dress'd in a Vest of Green flower'd with Flowers of Gold, and

an exact copy of an engraving from the picture itself, made under the auspices of the Society of Antiquaries. On the king's robes no less than twenty crowned R's are visible. But the evidence that Anne's initial was similarly used is even more remarkable. After the queen's death the king himself gave orders, still extant, for the building of her tomb.¹ On this tomb were placed the effigies of the king and queen, represented as clasping each other's hands. I now quote from Nichol's detailed description.²

"The robes of the King are powdered or strewn with three badges, the White Hart, the Broom Plant, and the Rising Sun. Among them are intermixed *the letters r and a, the initials of Richard and Anne.*³ . . It is now high time to turn to the devices found upon the effigy of Queen Anne. Her coat or boddice is covered with a flowered pattern, *intermixed with the letters r and a crowned.* On her gown are the same letters linked together, and also crowned; but the largest figures are alternations of a peculiarly formed knot, of which no other example has been found, and the badge of the Ostrich, collared and chained, and holding in its beak a nail.⁴ About both the two last are small sprigs or leaves, which there is reason to suppose are those of the

the initial Letters of his Name," etc. In Shaw, plate 32, is given a print of the Wilton House portrait of Richard II (1377), in which the magnificent robes are covered with harts, beanpods, eagles, etc., in intricate devices. See also Strutt, II, Plate lxxxiv (opp. p. 229).

¹ For the directions to the masons, see Rymer's *Foedera*, III, Pt. iv, pp. 105-6 (April 1, 1395); for the directions for the metal work, see p. 106 (April 24, 1395). See Dart's *Westmonasterium*, II, 42-46, for further account of the tomb.

² *Archæologia*, xxix (1842), pp. 32-59. I am indebted for this important reference to Professor Charles H. McIlwain, of Princeton University.

³ P. 36.

⁴ See the account in Camden (*Remaines*, ed. 1629, p. 181), of the queen's device. Camden's authority, however, seems to have been this very effigy.

linden or lime, which was used by the house of Bohemia. The same leaves are added to the White Harts on the King's robe; they form the running border of the Queen's mantle, and they are sprinkled over the latter, *together with crowned A's and R's*, which differ from the letters before mentioned, in being capitals, and of a much larger size."¹ The use of Anne's initial in a manner similar to that in which the initials of Edward III, Queen Philippa, and Richard himself had been employed, is, accordingly, established.²

¹ *Archaeologia*, xxix, p. 48.

² This use of Anne's initial brings at once into question the "crowned A" of the Prioress's brooch:

Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene;
And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene,
On which ther was first write a crowned A,
And after, *Amor vincit omnia* (A. 158-62).

Is there a reference here also to the queen's initial? I think not. It is of course merely a coincidence that Anne and Amor begin with the same letter, and in this instance there seems to be no reasonable ground for ascribing any other significance than *Amor vincens* to the crowned A. The motto itself was of very frequent occurrence, (see, for example, Gower, *Vox Cl.*, vi, 999; *Cronica Tripartita*, Prologue, l. 7; *Ecce patet tensus*, l. 3), often with a pious transfer of its reference from earthly love to the "love celestiall." This transfer is shown unmistakably by the fact—pointed out to me by Professor C. F. Brown—that the substitution of *caritas* for *amor* is not uncommon in mediæval religious literature; as, for instance, in the *Miraculum S. Nicolai Andegavensis* (Bib. Nat. Ms. lat. 12, 611, xii cent.): "Sed quia scriptum est: Caritas omnia vincit," etc., (text printed in *Catal. Codd. Hagiogr. Lat. Biblioth. Nat. Parisiensis*, ed. Bollandists, Vol. III, p. 159). The common use of the first word of the motto as a device—referring, however, to "love of kinde"—is clear from the well-known passage in *The Squyr of Lowe Degre* (ed. Mead, ll. 211-16; cf., also, Miss Hammond's interesting remarks on the crowned letters in certain Shirley MSS., *Anglia*, xxx, 320; and see, too, the cut of the A-brooch in Fairholt, *Costume in England*, third ed., 1885, II, 95). Is it not simply one of the Prioress's engaging foibles that she wears the device of the heavenly love as earthly lovers had set the mode? The *Amor* alone gives ample explana-

But we know not only the mere fact that Anne's initial was employed ; there is vivid contemporary evidence of one at least of the specific forms which its employment took. On the 29th of August, 1393, Richard and Anne visited London in order that the king might be publicly reconciled with the citizens after their long estrangement. The occasion, which was celebrated with pomp and extravagant display, is described circumstantially in the well-known poem of Richard de Maidstone.¹ Among the other festivities was a procession of the several trades, which are enumerated at great length.² The list closes with the significant detail :

A super r gratis stat in artibus hic numeratis.

Whether on their pageants or on their liveries or insignia, Anne's letter was displayed above Richard's in the long

tion for the crowned A ; so understood, the characterization is of a piece throughout ; whereas a reference to the queen seems here not only quite uncalled for, but even to strike a discordant note.

¹*Political Poems and Songs* (Rolls Series), I, 282-300.

² *Hos sequitur phalerata cohors cujuslibet artis ;*

Secta docet sortem quaeque tenere suam.

Hic argentarius, hic piscarius, secus illum

Mercibus hic deditur, venditor atque meri.

Hic apothecarius, pistor, pictor, lathomusque ;

Hic cultellarius, tonsor, et armifaber.

Hic carpentarius, scissor, sartor, ibi sutor ;

Hic pelliparius, fulloque, mango, faber.

Hic sunt artifices, ibi carnifices, ibi tector ;

Hic lorinarius, pannariusque simul.

Ibi vaquinator, hic zonarius, ibi textor ;

Hic candelarius, cerarius pariter.

Hic pandoxator, ibi streparius, ibi junctor ;

Est ibi pomilio, sic anigerulus hic.

A super r gratis stat in artibus hic numeratis,

* * * * * (pp. 284-85.)

Unluckily there seems to be just here a break in the ms., but the essential point is clear.

procession through the London streets. And it is of somewhat curious interest that the king himself is said, in the lines just following, to impress the beholder "velut Troilus;" while Anne

Pulchra quidem pulchris stat circumcincta puellis,
Vincit Amazonibus Troja novella sub his.

It seems safe to say, then, in the light of all these facts, that the coronation of Anne of Bohemia was followed by the appearance at court, in manifest and conspicuous fashion, of the letter A, side by side with or together with the hitherto familiar R. Chaucer's allusion would then be perfectly transparent and instantly intelligible to his contemporary readers.

If this interpretation of the line be correct (and it reads into it absolutely nothing extraneous), the date of the first book of the *Troilus* is fixed as after January 14, 1382.¹ The use of the "now" seems to imply a somewhat recent modification of the status of the letter, and to point, accordingly, to a date soon rather than long after the coronation. Farther than that one cannot well go; the essential thing is that the *Troilus* is placed, if the argument be sound, pre-

¹ It may be suggested that the line under discussion belongs to the *revision* of the *Troilus*, for which Professor Tatlock suggests the date "1380, or somewhat later" (*Chronology*, p. 15). In that case, the reference to the queen would not be found in Phillipp's 8252. Through the courtesy of Dr. Furnivall and of Mr. T. Fitzroy Fenwick I am able to give the reading of the Phillipp's ms., which is as follows:

Among ye which was Criseida
In wydewes habite blak but netheles
Right as our *lettre* is now a
In beute ferst so stood she makeles.

The line, then, has been in the *Troilus* from the first. As it stands in the Phillipp's ms., the reference seems even more unmistakable, for it is "our *lettre*" *par excellence* which "is now a." But a word (in all likelihood "firste" itself) has probably dropped out.

cisely where the independent considerations of its style and maturity and of its relations to the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women* have seemed to indicate that it belongs.¹

But what, it will undoubtedly be asked, is to be said of Gower's supposed allusion to Chaucer's *Troilus* in the *Mirour de l'Omme*? Altogether independently of the considerations which have just been brought forward, I believe it to be highly improbable that Gower is alluding to Chaucer's poem. It becomes necessary, therefore, to recur briefly to the argument of Professor J. S. P. Tatlock,² based on the passage referred to, in support of a date for the *Troilus* before 1377. This argument I have already discussed,³ and to this criticism Dr. Tatlock replies at length in his recent volume on *The Development and Chronology of Chaucer's Works*.⁴ In the process of rebuttal and surrebuttal the mass of detail has obscured certain salient points which it seems well to disengage.

1. It is important, first of all, to define the bearing of Gower's phrase "*oït chanter la geste De Troïlus et de la belle Creseide*." Professor Tatlock,⁵ for example, metamorphoses a statement of mine⁶ that Guido may possibly have been the source of Gower's knowledge, into a willingness "to entertain the idea that the *geste* which Sompnolent dreams he hears sung may have been a few scattered pages in Guido's Latin prose!" The point is immaterial, except as it concerns the principle to be followed in interpreting the phrase. For it is essential to notice that the form in which Gower represents Sompnolent as hearing the story need have nothing whatever to do with the form under which Gower himself

¹ See my discussion of these considerations in *Publ. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, xx, 819-23, 833-41.

² *Modern Philology*, I, 317 ff.

³ *Publ. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, xx, 823-33.

⁴ Chaucer Soc., 1907, pp. 26-33.

⁵ *Chronology*, pp. 28-29.

⁶ *Publ. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, xx, 833.

may have known it. I myself know, let us say, the story of Hero and Leander through Marlowe's poem, and I write a narrative in which I represent one of the characters as hearing told the story of Hero and Leander. Does that mean to anybody, unless I say so, that I represent my character as *hearing recited Marlowe's poem*? Dr. Tatlock himself would hardly suggest that what Sompnolent heard sung was the actual eight thousand and odd lines of Chaucer's *Troilus*. In other words, "chanter la geste" belongs to Sompnolent's dream; he hears sung, in his dream, the story of Troilus and the fair Criseyde, precisely as he might, at the marriage of Pride and the World, earlier in the *Mirour*, have listened to Temptacion, when

" . . . mainte delitable geste
 Leur dist, dont il les cuers entice
 Des jofnes dames au delice" (ll. 981-83).

The "chanter" naturally, though not necessarily, suggests a story sung by "minstrales and gestiours, that tellen tales,"¹ and Gower indeed, may possibly have known it himself in some such form. But the manner in which he represents *Sompnolent* as hearing it leaves the form or forms in which he himself actually knew it, absolutely indeterminate. The phrase "chanter la geste," then, has practically no evidential value.

2. The allusion in Gower dates from about 1377.² But in 1369 Froissart, in his *Paradys d'Amours*, had placed Troilus, whose name he coupled in the same line with that of Paris, at the head of a conventional list of lovers.³ Troilus *as a lover* implies Criseyde as inevitably as Paris implies Helen. The loves of Troilus and Criseyde were accordingly the subject of an allusion eight years before

¹ *H. F.*, 1197-98.

² Tatlock, *Chronology*, p. 26; cf. pp. 220-25.

³ *Poésies*, ed. Scheler, I, 29, ll. 971 ff., esp. l. 974; cf. *Publ. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, XX, 825; Tatlock, *Chronology*, p. 29.

Gower referred to them, and Froissart's reference is certainly not to Chaucer's poem. What version of the love-story Froissart had in mind is for our purpose wholly unimportant; his allusion demonstrates the fact that *independently of Chaucer* the love-story of Troilus (*not* Diomedes) and Criseyde was known, and known well enough to permit one's knowledge to be taken for granted. That in itself makes the extreme of caution necessary in dealing with a bare reference such as Gower's. Moreover, Tatlock's statement of "its [the love-story's] insignificance all over Europe before or apart from their [Boccaccio's and Chaucer's] influence"¹ and his reference to it as "a few scattered bits lost in a long poem, or (worse yet) in a Latin prose work"² simply beg the question. For the earlier treatments of the episode were manifestly not insignificant to Chaucer, who used again and again the "scattered bits lost" in both Benoit and Guido to supplement or modify Boccaccio.³ That is to say, *Chaucer* was indubitably familiar with the story of Troilus and Criseyde independently of Boccaccio: *that* we know. But suppose we did not know it. Is there any argument which Professor Tatlock draws from the alleged earlier insignificance of the love-story which would not bear with equal force against the possibility of any reference to earlier versions in *Chaucer's* work? Yet it is insisted that the bare mention of the story by the one cannot possibly refer to any of the sources whose use by the other to supplement Boccaccio is accepted as a common-place! Any difficulty which is raised on the score of Gower's (or his readers') supposed unfamiliarity with the love-story before Chaucer's *Troilus* is, I think it may be fairly said, factitious.

3. As regards the spelling *Creseide*, Professor Tatlock

¹ *Chronology*, p. 28.

² *Ib.*, p. 30.

³ See especially, on this point, Karl Young, *The Origin and Development of the Story of Troilus and Criseyde* (Chaucer Soc., 1908), pp. 105-139. Dr. Young's brilliant study reached me only after this article was in page-proof.

admits that "we must not assume . . . that Chaucer was the innovator" in the substitution of C for G.¹ In other words, *independently of Chaucer* the initial C appears in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in MSS. of Guido, and even in the *Filostrato* itself. It is not necessary—and without further evidence it certainly is not safe—to assume that Gower followed Chaucer's usage, or Chaucer Gower's. There may readily have been a common influence—a possibility which the mere lack of adequate data cannot invalidate. As for the fact that "Gower's form is French, with a final -e, *Creseide*,"² one is inclined to surmise that that, perhaps, is due to the fact that Gower was writing in French! A glance at the index of Macaulay's first volume will show a score or so of proper names to which, in his French poems, Gower has (naturally) given the French form, and logic would suggest that that obvious fact is reason enough for the -e of *Creseide*. It is sufficient to add that when Gower writes in Latin, he spells *Crisaida*, with final -a,³ and that the same is true once when he uses the name in English.⁴ Neither the supposed unfamiliarity of the story, then, nor the peculiarity in the spelling of Criseyde's name makes strongly against a reference to an earlier version than Chaucer's. There is, on the other hand, evidence which makes strongly for such a reference, and to that I pass.

4. Gower, as Dr. Tatlock points out,⁵ mentions Criseyde again in the *Vox Clamantis* (soon after 1383). "It is worthy of remark," Tatlock continues, "that there is no significant change in his manner of mentioning the lovers, which suggests that he had had no accession to his information since the first reference" (*l. c.*, n. 1). The line in the *Vox*

¹ *Chronology*, p. 31; cf. *Publ. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, xx, 826-29.

² *Chronology*, p. 31.

³ *Vox Clamantis*, vi, 1328.

⁴ *Confessio*, II, 2456.

⁵ *Chronology*, p. 30.

*Clamantis*¹ repays examination, especially in the light of the statement just quoted. It is as follows: "Fictaque Crisaida gaudet amare duos." The final *-a* of Crisaida has already been adverted to. It is the conception of Criseyde herself—as implied in the "*gaudet* amare duos"—which is here important. For that conception belongs to the older sources—to Guido in particular—and *not* to Chaucer. It is just such fickleness as is implied in Gower's "*gaudet*" that one finds Guido harping on in his account of Briseida's faithlessness.² And it is just this harsh judgment of the earlier versions against which Chaucer sets his own interpretation with a strength of feeling which is almost personal:

Ne me ne list this sely womman chyde
 Ferther than the story wol devyse.
 Hir name, allas! is publissed so wyde,
 That for hir gilt it oughte y-now suffyse.
 And if I mighte excuse hir any wyse,
 For she so sory was for hir untrouthe,
 Y-wis, I wolde excuse hir yet for routhe (v. 1093-99).

These lines follow the poignant and tragic lament, suggested in part by Benoit,³ which in turn is introduced by the statement that

*Ther made never womman more wo
 Than she, whan that she falsed Troilus* (v. 1052-53).

If Gower wrote the line in the *Vox Clamantis*, with its "gaudet amare duos," of Chaucer's Criseyde, one is forced to conclude that he had never read, or else deliberately ignored, the fifth book of the *Troilus*. On the other hand, the reference fits perfectly the pre-Chaucerian conception of

¹ vi, 1328.

² See, for example, the long extract from Guido's fortieth chapter in Sommer's edition of the *Recuyell*, I, cxlix-clv; cf. also Hamilton, *Chaucer's Indebtedness to Guido delle Colonne*, pp. 84-88, 124-26; Young, p. 127.

³ Hamilton, p. 124; Young, pp. 135-36.

Criseyde's falsity. But as Dr. Tatlock himself points out, this allusion and the earlier one in the *Mirour* show no significant differences, and therefore stand or fall together. The "Crisaida [quae] gaudet amare duos" and "la belle Creseide" are admittedly one and the same, and one of them sharply diverges from Chaucer's conception of the character. The conclusion is obvious.

5. Finally, in considering the possible bearing of Gower's allusion, I wish to repeat the suggestion already made¹ that Gower might readily have known the story of the *Filostrato* itself from Chaucer before the *Troilus* was written. This suggestion is given additional point by a curious fact which Professor Tatlock himself adduces. "All are agreed," he remarks,² "that Gower knew no Italian. Yet lines 3831-4 [of the *Mirour*] run :

'Sicomme ly sages la repute,
Envie est celle peccatrice,
Qes nobles courtz de son office
Demoert et est commune pute,'

which cannot be independent of Dante's words on envy :

'La meretrice, che mai dall' ospizio
Di Cesare non torse gli occhi putti,
Morte comune, e delle corti vizio' (*Inf.*, XIII, 64-6) . . .

We can hardly avoid believing that Chaucer read or repeated the passage to Gower."³ Gower, then, knew *Dante*. He must, accordingly, either have known Italian (and the striking verbal similarities which Tatlock notes are hard to explain on any other supposition), or Chaucer must have shared his new found treasure with him. If Gower could

¹*Publ. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, XX, 823-24.

²*Chronology*, p. 221.

³See *l. c.*, n. 2, for other verbal parallels.

read Dante, he could read Boccaccio. If Chaucer read Dante to Gower, he could (and more probably would !) also read Boccaccio.¹ In either case, Gower was scarcely ignorant of the *Filostrato*. If he knew the *Filostrato*, the reference in the *Mirour* is sufficiently explained.

Professor Tatlock himself, then, has contributed evidence of weight in support of the position that "there are too many other possible [one may now, I think, say "probable"] explanations of the reference in Gower to allow one safely to use it"² to settle the date of the *Troilus*. Whether the interpretation which has just been proposed of the line in the *Troilus* itself is open to the same objection, it is for others to judge. But its accordance with definite external facts, its solution at every point of the otherwise baffling difficulties in the wording of the line itself, and its harmony with Chaucer's well-known personal attitude toward the Court, seem to warrant consideration of its validity.

JOHN LIVINGSTON LOWES.

¹ Note also Tatlock's suggestion (*Chronology*, p. 221, n. 3) that the anecdote of Dante in CA., VII, 2329* ff., probably came through Chaucer, and that the reference to the tyrants of Lombardy in the *Mirour*, 23233-68, was also due to Chaucer's report (*op. cit.*, p. 222, n. 1).

² *Publ. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, XX, 833.